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REMARKS

Applicant appreciates Examiner's thorough review of the application.

Reconsideration and allowance of all claims are requested.

Claim 28 is allowable and has been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and intervening claims.

Claim 1 is patentable under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over Kunimune et al (US PAT 3,892,189)

A prior art reference anticipates the subject matter of a claim only when the reference discloses every feature of the claimed invention, either explicitly or inherently (see Hazani v. Int'l Trade Comm'n, 126 F.3d 1473, 1477, 44 USPQ2d 1358, 1361 (Fed. Cir. 1997) and RCA Corp. v. Applied Digital Data Systems, Inc., 730 F.2d 1440, 1444, 221 USPQ 385, 388 (Fed. Cir. 1984)).

Applicant's Claim 1 recites:

A tray connecting apparatus comprising:

a flexible plastic strip having a central, longitudinal living hinge, the strip having one or more tray holder clips connected to each other, each tray holder clip having opposite tray engagement sides projecting laterally from the central living hinge,

the tray engagement sides having end connectors for fitting mounting recesses in tray edges,

the end connectors having split aligning projection receivers at extremities for receiving aligning projections on the tray edge mounting recesses, and the tray holder clips having openings for receiving securing projections in the tray edge

recesses.

The applied patent to Kunimune discloses a case for storing compact disks which comprises two case members. One edge of each the case members is connected with connecting or hinge members. Kunimune describes the hinge, which connects the two case members, on Col. 3 Lines 26-28 as "Engaging parts and having a U-shaped cross section are formed on both sides of the center part of the connecting members (Col. 3 Lines 26-28). The hinge disclosed in Kunimune is used to connect the two case members whereas the living hinge pointed out in claim 1 connects clips with openings for receiving securing projections. Kunimune fails to teach that clips are connected with trays which claim 1 points out.

Kunimune fails to teach a tray connecting apparatus. The hinge in Kunimune only connects the two case members together. Kunimune discloses using case members for storing a multiplicity of compact and floppy disks whereas, claim 1 points out that trays are used to store compact disks and other items. Using case members to hold compact disks is inherently different from using clips and trays to hold compact disks and other items. Therefore, Kunimune can not teach a tray connecting apparatus.

Kunimune does not teach a flexible plastic strip having one or more tray holder clips connected to each other to form a central living hinge, which is pointed out in claim 1. Applicant is unable to locate where Fig 4. demonstrates a flexible plastic strip having one or more tray holder clips.

Kunimune does not teach or suggest a flexible plastic strip having a central, longitudinal living hinge, the strip having one or more tray holder clips connected to each other, each tray holder clip having opposite tray engagement sides projecting laterally from the central living

hinge.

Claim 1 specifies unique features that are not taught by Kunimune.

Thus, since each and every limitation of Applicants' Claim 1 is not disclosed in Kunimune, either expressly or through the principles of inherency, the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kunimune is improper, and should be withdrawn.

Claims 21-27 are patentable under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over Li (US PAT 5,727,681)

Li does not anticipate claims 21-27.

Li describes a holding element 3, consisting of a long deformable body with with fulcrum rod portions 31, 22, insertion slots 34 and necks 35 (column 3, line 1).

The trays 4 have guide slots 44 with raised blocks 43 that fit into insertion slots 34 and are rotatably held in position by necks 35 and can be disengaged by a small pulling force (column 3, lines 20-25).

Claim 21 distinguishes from Li by pointing out that one or more clips are hinged relative to one another and that the individual clips have connectors for connecting the clips to the trays whereas, the connecting member in Li is a single long deformable body. Applicant is unable to locate where Fig 5 ref 36 of Li discloses "individual clips in each set are hinged."

Additionally, Claim 21 distinguishes from Li by pointing out the number of sets of clips corresponds to the number of recesses in each tray which is not found in or obvious from Li. The long deformable holding element disclosed in Li contains a set number of insertions, whereas claim 21 allows for each clip to correspond to one tray. Applicant is unable to specifically locate where Li discloses "wherein the number of sets of clips corresponds to the number of mounting recesses on the individual trays."

Claim 26 adds that one or more clips have a trapezoidal shape with triangles removed from a longer side surface for bending one or more clips along the axis, which is not found in Li. The applicant is unable to specifically locate where Li discloses the use of clips. Furthermore, Li does not disclose a trapezoidal shaped holding member with triangles removed from a longer side surface for bending the one or more clips along the longitudinal axis. Li discloses a vertical gap, with the slots having a reduced neck portion, the bottom surface of the holding element has a recessed notch that makes it easier to curl the holding element. Fig 5. of Li clearly shows that the long deformable holding member is not a trapezoid. Fig 4. of Li shows that the deformable holding element 3 is rectangular shaped and not trapezoidal as claim 26 points out. The addendum to this response from dictionary.com describes a trapezoid as "a quadrilateral plane figure having two parallel and two nonparallel sides." Therefore, a rectangle can not be a trapezoid.

Claims 21-27 specifies unique features that are not taught by Li.

Thus, since each and every limitation of Applicants' Claims 21-27 are not disclosed in Li, either expressly or through the principles of inherency, the rejection of Claims 21-27 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Li are improper, and should be withdrawn.

Claim 29 is patentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Li (US PAT 5,727,681)

"To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations." *In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991).

Li does not anticipate or suggest claim 29.

Li describes a holding element 3, consisting of a long deformable body with projecting fulcrum rod portions 31, 22, insertion slots 34 and necks 35 (column 3, line 1).

Claim 29 points out the mounting recesses and clips have complementary dovetail shapes, further comprising locking ribs projecting inwards from ends of the mounting recesses on the individual trays and complementary grooves on ends of one or more clips for receiving and holding the locking ribs.

Examiner states it would have been obvious to reshape the mounting recesses of Li to have complementary dovetail shapes as to provide better complimentary fit between the recesses and the clips. However, it would have been unobvious to modify Li to include complementary dovetail shapes with locking ribs. The complementary dovetail shape in claim 29 relates to the clips and trays used in the current invention. Because Li does not include clips it would be impossible to make the long deformable body have a complementary dovetail shaped clips which corresponds to trays. The Examiner states it would be obvious to modify Li to include clips and trays with complementary dovetail shapes to provide better complimentary fit. However, Li would have to be completely redesigned to include both trays and clips, which is not suggested in Li. Examiner cites to Fig. 5 as teaching this feature. However, Li does not teach using clips and clearly does not teach using clips to hold trays.

Claim 29 specifies a unique feature that is not taught by Li.

For at least this reason the rejection of Claim 29 under 35 U.S.C 103(a) over Li is improper and should be withdrawn.

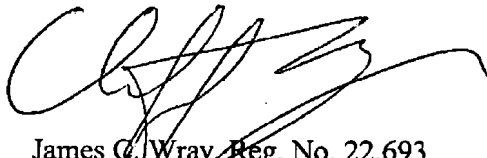
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CONCLUSION

Reconsideration and allowance of all claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully,



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trapezoid - Definitions from Dictionary.com

<http://dictionary.reference.com/search?r=2&q=trapezoid>trap·e·zoid ⓘ ⓘ [trap-uh-zoid] [Pronunciation Key](#) - [Show IPA Pronunciation](#)

-noun

1. *Geometry.*

- a. a quadrilateral plane figure having two parallel and two nonparallel sides.
- b. *British.* ~~trapezium~~ (def. 1b).

2. *Anatomy.* a bone in the wrist that articulates with the metacarpal bone of the forefinger.

-adjective

3. Also, trap·e·zoi·dal. *Geometry.* of, pertaining to, or having the form of a trapezoid.

[Origin: 1695-1705; < NL *trapezoidēs* < LGk *trapezoiōēs* trapeziumlike.
See ~~trapezium~~, ~~trapezoid~~.]